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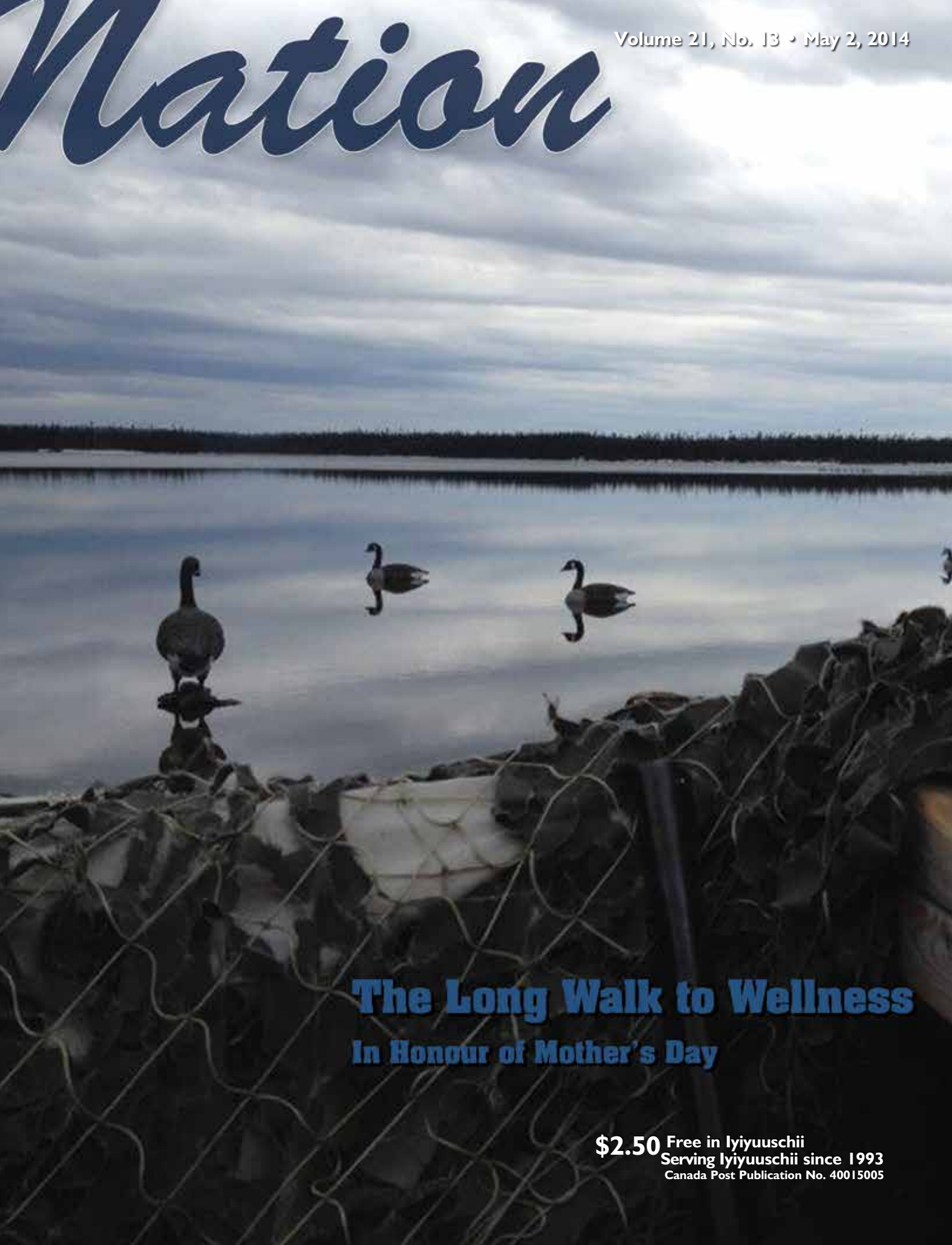

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editorial

Cree Votes count

By Will Nicholls

For years the concept of the Cree people taking control of their own destiny has been said again and again. Here and there we saw steps in that direction. From defeating the Hydro-Quebec great Whale Project to assuming federal and provincial obligations under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and becoming a part of the regional government of the traditional Cree territory this has been evident.

A proud moment was seeing Romeo Saganash elected to represent our riding as part of the federal government. At that time I could see the rise of Cree participation in Canadian politics.

The same pride was felt in the latest provincial election. Essentially the Cree Nation, as a whole, decided who we thought would best represent us in Quebec's National Assembly. It means something that we were the ones to determine that Liberal candidate Jean Boucher was the one to do the job.

Not only did we express our confidence in him but despite a lack of information on voting we turned out in larger numbers than before. Every Cree community saw a larger voter turnout than the last 2012 Quebec election.

Whapmagoostui had 39 voters out of 392. This was a 10% turnout compared to 2012's 8.6%. Chisasibi had 508 voters of 2426 or 21% hit the polls compared to 2012's 13.2%. Wemindji voters had an amazing 29.5 % turnout that saw 508 voters out of 895 wanting to express their choice. The 2012 election only excited 20.8% of Wemindji's eligible voters. Eastmain upped their political interest from 2012's 17.3% turnout to 26.1% as 126 voters out of 483 made their vote count. The Skag rose from 20% in 2012 to 25.9% making their voice heard. Waskaganish had 336 voters out of 1299 cast their ballots. Even tiny Nemaska pulled themselves up as 71 or the 438 voters showed up. The last election saw 15.2% mark their X compared to the 2014 turnout of 16.25. Waswanipi showed great strides in being political as 285 voters braved the polls. It was almost a 10% increase in voters allowing them to hit the 29.1% mark. Mistissini welcomed 23% or 451 people out of 1960 who wanted to make a difference. The highest turnout was Ouje-Bougoumou hitting the 32.2% voter turnout as 139 out of 432 hit the polls. The last election in 2012 was still impressive as they racked up a 26.3% voter turnout in 2012.

All in all something to be proud of as every vote counted. It is a wonderful thing to take control of your future and this is one of the ways to do it. Chibougamau's Sentinelle acknowledged it saying the Cree and the Inuit chose the Member of the National Assembly to represent the Ungava riding. This means we will be courted by the political parties in the future. It also means that they will listen to our concerns, desires and dreams of the future for our way of life and what that means.

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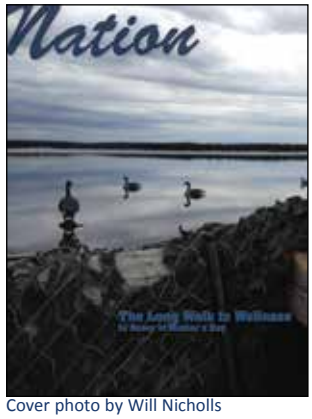

Cover photo by Will Nicholls

Things to ponder

By Sonny Orr

It was during the middle of the viewing of the movie "King Kong" that we, as children, met fear head on. In the mid 1960's It was in the darkened great auditorium of Horden Hall in Moose Factory that we got our first taste of science fiction animation. Holey Moley, King Kong sure scared the heck out of everyone in the audience, including me. Up there on the big screen, the King looked enormous and we felt the excitement growing and growing and some felt compassion for the giant ape. There always was a difference between some of us, but it made for a more interesting time as we watched with fascinating horror. As the fight between humans and the giant simian started to get rough, the special effects started to take its toll on our tender eyes and emotions. The ground shook realistically and made many of us cry. The movie was just too real and the special effects made some kids run out. In reality, a small earthquake shook the lower James Bay area and scared a lot more than just a few kids watching a movie.

Sometimes, I have enough time in the day to just think about things in general and try to figure out just what is going on. I have a few theories. For one, the weather… this year, people are longing for the global warming during the winter months and cool days during the summer days. I have a solution- move south of the equator, where winter feels warm and summer feels cool. Simple. In reality, the weather is an indicator that things are just starting to settle down by acting up, shifting around then relaxing for a few thousand years, just as a dog would do to get more comfortable while lying down after a good meal.

Earth has had it good for the last hundred thousand years or so, stabilizing long enough for mankind to flourish enough to make a small difference in the air that we breathe. Yes, mankind, as miniscule as it is against the vastness of Mother Nature, can influence the world as we know it. Mother Nature, in one hand, is slowly stirring around to shift and accommodate the imbalance of our little world and make it nice again. It's just that the stirring around causes natural disasters known to wipe out anything around it.

Say for example, there seems to be a lot more earthquakes on the Pacific coast, from northern hemisphere to the south. Chile to Vancouver Island, wherever people are around to notice, earthquakes are happening. The people in Yellowstone National Park are no longer afraid of the bears but are more afraid to be scalded by some erupting geyser full of molten lava than any wildlife around. That is if the wildlife hasn't abandoned the area yet!

Further north, we laugh at how far away we are from any earthquake zone, but a smoldering molten cauldron of volcanic activity is just north east of us in Iceland. Remember that volcano erupting and spewing out so much ash that commercial airline carriers shut down operations in fear of flying through the highly abrasive ash clouds. Haven't heard? Well don't worry, there is still time at hand as no one is predicting something drastic just as of yet. But don't forget Pompeii and Mt. St Helen's, which blew up so quickly that no one could escape. Yet, to Mother, it was just a little burp in need of relief.

Now, does fracking cause earthquakes? Does it matter? It'll be too late to appease anyone or even God if all the Earth people are right for a change and the big one goes off in time instead of not! Signing off from fairly stable grounds, for now…

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Empty cupboards

New study sheds light on food insecurity in the North

By Jeremy East

Exorbitant grocery prices and unhealthy options are rampant in grocery stores throughout northern aboriginal communities, yet very few efforts are being made to ensure families have access to affordable, nutritious foods.

Food insecurity is a well-known issue in Arctic Canada. But a report released by the Canadian Council of Academies last month captures the details of this challenge in a new and disturbing way. The study, titled *Aboriginal Food Security in Northern Canada: An Assessment of the State of Knowledge* exposes a number of urgent and alarming facts behind nutrition in the North with a catalogue of information on the subject that aims to initiate dialogue for solutions.

"There are very few people who get all their calories from traditional food, so everyone is concerned about what is available to them in stores," said Dr. Harriet Kuhlein, chair of the panel that produced the report.

Commissioned by the federal health ministry in 2011, the report gathered existing evidence on food availability and nutritional options throughout northern Canada. The panel's findings are decidedly grim. The primary conclusion described food insecurity in Aboriginal communities as a serious problem that also affects as many as half the non-Aboriginal households in the north.

Among the information cited in the report was a 2007-2008 study that found 70% of Inuit children lived in food-insecure households. Of the 25% who lived in severely food-insecure households, 90% went hungry and 60% went entire days without eating.

The high cost of food transport is one of the primary causes of insecurity in low-income households, particularly in fly-in communities. But that doesn't mean that the concept of a food-secure North isn't realistic.

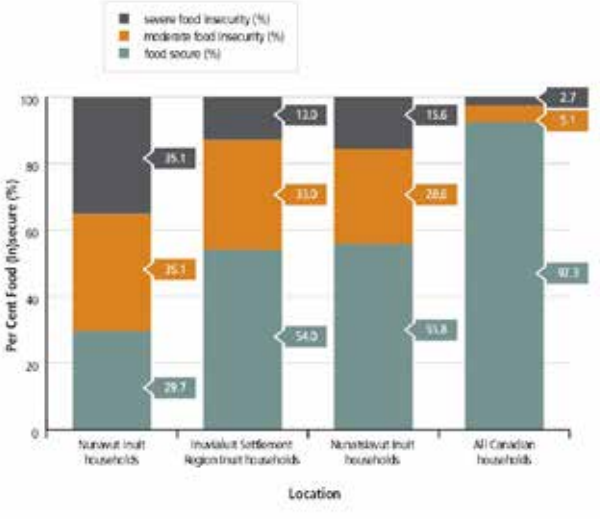
"The key is supply and demand," said Kuhnlein. "People have to demand better food, and there has to be government support to ensure that those demands are met. First Nations leadership need to sit down with the government and figure out how to make better food available that people can access with the income that they have."

While access to any food is problematic for some, the lack of healthy food availability is a problem for all. The report found that many of the often-available market foods were not only the cheapest, but also the unhealthiest.

The report does not offer any immediate solutions. However, it does emphasize the importance of establishing "food sovereignty" in Aboriginal communities across Canada. The panel unanimously found that "decisions about food systems, including markets, production modes, food cultures, and environments, should be made by those who depend on them."

The report is currently under review by the Ministry of Health.

"One would expect that there will be a strong response to this information," said Kuhlein. "How can development in the North and with Aboriginal people take place if it isn't addressed?"



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A coastal sweep

Waskaganish teams dominate CREE hockey tourney

by Daniel Coyle

Waskaganish Starlets – Cadet Broomball Champions

The 22nd Annual CREE Invitational Minor Hockey Tournament took place April 10-13, with on-ice action happening at the Air Creebec Centre in Val d'Or and arenas in Amos, Senneterre and Malartic. A total of 72 hockey teams and 36 broomball teams took part, ranging from PeeWee to Junior, with teams from Waskaganish enjoying extraordinary success.

The main event of the tournament was the final of the Junior Hockey Competitive category. Moose Factory led the way in the preliminary round of the tourney, posting wins over the Waskaganish Jr. Wings and Kitogan Zibi Jr. Bulls, earning them top seeding and a bye to the semi-finals.

But the Jr. Wings, winless in the preliminary rounds, would rebound in the elimination round. Led by four Hester boys – Alexander, Brett, Chris and Clinton – and teammate Wendel Blackned, Waskaganish dominated fourth-seeded Chisasibi, knocking off the Kings 6-0 and setting the stage for a semi-final rematch against Moose Factory. Fueled by a pair of goals by Blackned, Waskaganish knocked off Moose Factory 4-1 to qualify for the Junior Hockey Competitive Final.

The Jr. Bulls also rebounded from a preliminary round loss to Moose Factory to earn the third seed in the elimination round. Julia Dumont led the way with both goals as the Jr. Bulls knocked off sixth-seeded Waswanipi 2-0. Kitigan Zibi continued their stingy ways in the semi-finals, posting their third shutout of the tournament with a 1-0 win over Mistissini.

In the final, the Jr. Bulls struck first on a goal by Najij Coteto take a 1-0 first period lead. But then it was all Hesters, as Tyler Hester scored just three minutes later, assisted by Brett Hester, to knot the game at one goal apiece. Alexander Hester gave Waskaganish the lead with a pair of third period goals just 1:41 apart and the Bulls would not look back, winning the game 3-1 to lay claim to the Junior Hockey Competitive banner.

Over in the U-18 Girls Hockey category, the Waskaganish Firecats did not give up a goal in two games of preliminary round action. The Firecats dominated from start to finish in their opening game against Kiticisakik, winning 9-0. Kelsie Jolly scored four times for Waskaganish in the opener, while Melissa Jolly and Paula Salt each added a pair.

The Firecats continued their offensive onslaught against Chisasibi, shutting out the Lady Lynx 3-0, securing top seed in the elimination round and a bye into the semi-final, where Waskaganish needed overtime to beat

Waskaganish Jr. Renz – Bantam Hockey Competitive Champions

the Wemindji Lady Wolves 3-2, with Melissa Jolly potting the winner, 1:17 into the extra frame.

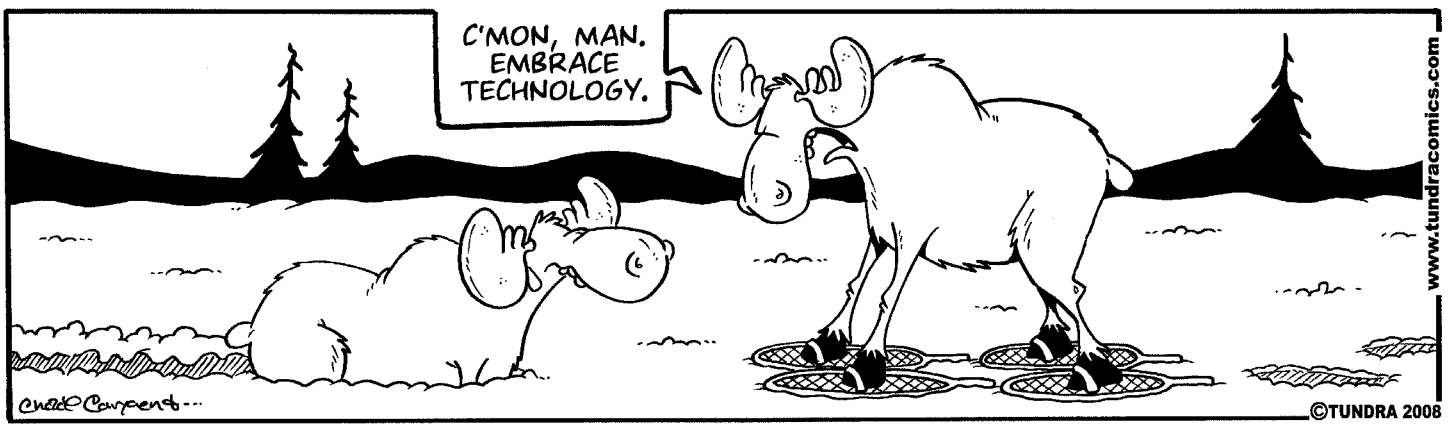
Like the Firecats, the Ouje Lady Hawks cruised through the preliminary round, recording a pair of shutouts, first against Chisasibi 3-0, before defeating the Lady Wolves 4-0, with Dawn Saganash and Mariah Blacksmith both recording a pair of markers. Again like Waskaganish, the Lady Hawks needed a 3-2 victory in their semi-final match, this time over Mistissini, to earn a berth in the U-18 Girls Hockey final against the Firecats.

The Lady Hawks jumped out to an early first period lead in the final, on a goal by Cheryl-Ann Mianscum. Oujé would extend their lead to 3-0 with a pair of second period goals by Saganash and Mianscum, sealing the Firecats' fate, as the Lady Hawks went on to a 4-2 victory to win the Girls U-18 Hockey Championship.

The Waskaganish Jr. Renz also got the job done, posting a perfect 5-0 record as they marched towards a Bantam Hockey Competitive title. Meanwhile, the Waskaganish Smokey Hill Bandits outscored opponents 27-9 en route to a clash with the Chisasibi Blizzard in the PeeWee Hockey Competitive final. But it was Chisasibi coming out on top, silencing the Bandits potent offense with a 3-0 shutout to win top honours.

In other tournament action, the Mistissini Falcons recovered from a tournament opening loss to defeat the Waskaganish Junior Wings 4-2 in the final of the Midget Hockey Competitive category.

The Waskaganish Starlets once again proved why they are among the best broomball programs in the game, going undefeated in six games to win the Cadet Broomball title, while the Lac Simon Lady Hawks gave up a mere three goals in three elimination round games en route to taking the Junior Broomball title.



Mattagami youth competes at Miss North Ontario pageant

Janelle Golinowski, a member of Mattagami First Nation, will be showcasing her talents as a traditional dancer at the Miss North Ontario Regional Canada Pageant 2014. The 18-year-old is proud to have been selected to represent her community for the pageant to be held May 1-3 at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario.

"I am really excited to be taking part in this event as an Aboriginal woman," said Golinowski. "It gives me an opportunity to promote and celebrate our Aboriginal culture and act as a positive role model for other young First Nation women."

Featuring young women between the ages of 13 to 24, the pageant is an annual event that was created to help foster personal development in contestants as well as to promote and support charitable organizations and tourism in Northern Ontario.

Currently in her final year at Timmins High and Vocational School, Golinowski plans on continuing her education and hopes to pursue a career in either medicine or engineering.

Golinowski said that growing up in Mattagami has grounded her in Native traditions and culture, thanks to the Elders in the community. First introduced to traditional dance at the annual Mattagami Pow Wow, she started dancing in 2012 with the help of local traditional teacher and dancer Dana McKenzie. At the 2013 Mattagami Pow Wow, Golinowski was honoured with the title of Head Youth Dancer.

Since being selected for the pageant, Golinowski has been busy with promotional activities, gathering sponsorships and preparing for the event while completing her regular studies and responsibilities at home.

In addition to the crowning of Miss North Ontario Regional Canada, other award categories are up for grabs for the 46 participants. Supporters can vote for Golinowski for the People's Choice Award through the pageant's website: www.missnorthontario.com

The pageant event is also an official preliminary to Miss Teen Canada World and Miss Universe Canada.

Kelley back as Aboriginal Affairs Minister

A familiar face will handle Quebec's Aboriginal Affairs department in the new Liberal government of Philippe Couillard, which was sworn into power April 23 after winning a big majority in the April 7 provincial election.

Geoffrey Kelley, the Liberal MNA in the Montreal riding of Jacques-Cartier since 1994, was appointed Minister for Native Affairs, a position he twice held in the government of former Premier Jean Charest.

In the Charest government, Kelley was a friendly face who promoted Aboriginal social acceptability of industrial development under the Plan Nord.

"The participation of the Aboriginal peoples is essential to the Plan Nord's success," Kelley told the Canadian Business Journal in 2011. "The Plan Nord must mean for all Aboriginal communities economic and social spin-off and the enhancement of their living conditions. I am thinking here of the initiatives in the realms of education and training, culture and health that will enhance the quality of life in Aboriginal communities."

Other key appointees for northerners include Pierre Arcand as Energy and Natural Resources Minister with responsibility for the Plan Nord, and David Heurtel as Environment and Sustainable Development Minister.

In Honour of Mother's Day

Three Crees talk about the women who influenced them the most

By Amy German

Three generations of the Petawabano family.

With Mother's Day right around the corner, several Eeyouch spoke to the Nation about the first women they ever knew – their own mothers.

Tina Petawabano, Betty Anne Forward and Samson Wischee shared their mothers' life lessons, talked about the maternal support they had while growing up and about the anguish felt over seeing a mother's health decline.

Tina Petawabano

Eastmain's Tina Petawabano, a mother with a prolific career, is the director of Quebec Relations Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority. She spoke about her mother, Bella Petawabano, the Chair of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, and shared some childhood memories.

I just wanted to talk about how lucky I am to have my mom. There is just so much that she had done for our family and for her community.

One of the most important things that I learned from her was just how to follow your goals and your dreams.

My mother was once a young Eeyou from Eastmain who really did everything outside of the traditional norms. While most would stay home and raise a family, she did that for a while but then decided to come south to Montreal to pursue a Social Work degree at McGill University. She got her BA while having her three young kids with her during the early 1980s, moving us from Mistissini to the city.

I remember how hard she worked and this triggered something in me to understand that whatever you want to do in life, it is going to take a lot of hard work, perseverance and sacrifice.

At the time the three of us girls were all under 10, with the youngest in daycare and the older two in elementary school. It was an adjustment and a big shock. With bigger schools and things like public transportation and people everywhere, it all was just so fast but she managed to make it a really smooth transition despite this. She made

an incredible effort to ensure that we were okay and comfortable.

One thing I do remember, and my sister Lisa is going to kill me for saying this, is that she, the middle child who was six at the time, had more of a struggle adapting to city life and so she decided to go on a hunger strike in order to go home to Mistissini.

At the time we lived north of Snowdon and that was where our school was, while my mother went to McGill downtown and commuted via métro.

My mother came to our school every day at lunchtime, commuting back to our neighbourhood for the entire first week and a half of school just to make sure that Lisa ate her lunch and then would go back downtown to McGill. If she didn't do this, Lisa wouldn't eat. As I was a bit older, I didn't have the same lunch period so I couldn't sit with her and that made the shock even worse for her as it was such a big school, she couldn't see me either.

But then Lisa found friends and was okay.

Looking back at how hard my mother worked, I remember her typewriter as there were no computers back in those days. Because my room was right next to hers and her desk just happened to be exactly where my bed was on the other side of the wall. Every day at around 5 am I would start hearing click, click, click, bing.

We didn't have much money in those days but those were some of our best years as a family. My father could only visit every other weekend as he worked in Val d'Or, but he was there as often as he could. My mother managed the three of us and school full-time, but the fact that we did things together and worked really hard was great because there was nothing material about it.

Even in the later years when I went away to school, my mother would send me cards and always write "I will persist until I succeed" – the message is to keep trying until you get there. This is something that still resonates with me when I set a goal for myself.

My mother was the type who didn't compliment people a lot, so when she did it was meaningful. At her graduation supper, she told the guests that she couldn't have done it without her daughter. I couldn't believe that she said this because I always thought that I was such a brat.

She explained that the help I gave with my sisters and just making sure that they had something as simple as their snacks after school or making sure that we were doing our homework meant a lot.

I guess we all helped each other to achieve.

Betty Anne Forward

Mistissini high-school teacher Betty Anne Forward's mother Georgina recently retired after 37 years of touching the lives of many students and becoming one of the community's most treasured educators.

In honour of her mother's retirement, Forward spoke about her own journey in education with her mother as a guide.

I became a teacher because of my mother. She was probably the biggest influence on me becoming a teacher.

When I first went to college I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had always leaned towards something in English or writing, but after one year I felt like I still had no idea so I took some time off.

I came back to Mistissini and my mom informed me that the local school was looking for substitute teachers and to try it out. From there I got full-time replacement contracts with the elementary school and then the high school. I really liked working at the high school.

It was then that my mother and the principal asked me if I was going to go back and get my degree. While I had started the teacher-training program in Mistissini, as I was unmarried and didn't have a family at the time, I wound up going to McGill University to do my education degree.

My mother was always an elementary school teacher and she always made it look like so much fun. She would sing with her students and with anything she taught them, there would always be a lot of hands-on activities and art projects.

In university you finish your semesters in April and I would come home and help her with her class to do colourful bulletin boards, decorating her classroom and the doors and I

Betty Anne Forward had the chance to honour her mother at the Mistissini Native Women's Association annual Live Love Laugh Gala.

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The Wischee family welcoming Ruby.

just loved helping her with that. This is something that I still do now in my own classroom. Even though I teach Secondary 3-4, they still love this and I get a lot of compliments.

My mom told me that it never matters what age the kids are, they all want to come in and have fun while learning. This is something that I learned from her as well as to be organized and plan ahead. She also stressed the need to be professional at all times.

After 37 years of teaching, she probably remembers every single student of hers, having taught multiple generations of the same families.

When it came time for her to retire, she was just really sad to leave. Though she is enjoying her retirement, she suffered badly over the past year with arthritis and so she just couldn't teach anymore. It was tough because the kids would see her at the store and ask when she was coming back.

I would like to thank my mom for teaching me the value of hard work, for teaching me to be appreciative of not just the big things but also the little things in life, for always being there for me through the good and not so good times, and for always believing in me.

Samson Wischee

Hailing from Waskaganish, Samson Wischee shares his highs and lows over the past few months as his mother struggled with her health and talks about how his family has coped.

It started in January when my sister took my mom, Ruby Wischee, 65, to the clinic to get a check up because she is a larger woman, diabetic and had a boil on her lower back from sitting for too long on a trip. It just seemed to be getting worse and worse. She was medivaced to Val-d'Or that evening because the boil had become infected and the infection ran pretty deep.

She needed surgery, which she got. But we were told by her doctors that had she waited another 24 hours we would have lost her.

And then they told us that there was a second infection that would also require surgery

Before that she travelled a lot to attend gospel meetings and singing so this was very surprising to us and, used to her always being there, having her away from home has been very difficult. We were so used to her calling us over for lunch or supper to eat moose meat or rabbit in her very homey house.

She has been gone for months, from January until now (late April). For three months in Val-d'Or, before being transferred to Chisasibi for the last stage of her recovery. As she is a diabetic, we don't know how long that will be.

But I got to see her a lot over the last few months as I am on the road a lot for work as a local commissioner for the Cree School Board and the manager of our youth centre.

Every time I traveled I would leave earlier so that I could stop in Val-d'Or for a few hours and visit or schedule it so that I could see her after 6 pm, once they had finished changing her dressings. I would often get to Montreal at 2 am or 3 am for my 8 am meeting.

My sister Gloria, on the other hand, stayed in Val-d'Or at the Friendship Centre over two months.

Because of the infection my kids weren't able to visit her in her room. They didn't see her for two-and-a-half months and we had to have her birthday in her room this past winter. For this my daughter Zion, who is four, made her an artificial plant arrangement, with "Happy Birthday, Goog," on it as Zion calls her, short for Goo Goo. This name is something that my mother really likes.

When the nurses saw this they all started to call her Goog as did everyone else in the hospital. While this didn't make up for my daughter's absence, it did have an impact on my mother and carried her while she was in that room.

For almost two months I was pretty much gone (from home) for most of March and April (on business), only here for one solid week and a half but all of these visits made a difference for my mother. The message here is that every little bit counts, seeing someone, even if it is only for an hour or two.

Though my mom did come home for a week's visit recently, she is still in the hospital in Chisasibi.

This is the first time she has been hospitalized for this long. It has been very lonely for her, but we have had our laughs here and there.

We hope to have her here for Mother's Day, and if that happens, we are going to do something very special for her. We are just hoping that everything goes well with her between now and then, but we understand that we have to be patient.

MOCREEBEC COUNCIL OF THE CREE NATION

On February 13th, 2014, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come addressed the MoCreebec people informing them of the Grand Council's commitment to partner with the MoCreebec people toward a path of reconciliation into the family of the Cree Nation. He spoke of hope for a resolution to the long-standing issues and difficulties MoCreebec people have faced as beneficiaries of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA).

Grand Chief Coon Come clearly emphasized Grand Council's support to go full steam ahead in an effort to resolve the MoCreebec file. In his letter dated June 17th, 2013 to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the Grand Chief stated *"the time has come to resolve…the MoCreebec case through negotiations."*

Acting Chief
ALLAN JOLLY

MoCreebec and the Grand Council have begun a process to lobby and seek political support from all levels of governments, including First Nations in Quebec, Ontario, other Aboriginal organizations, and both levels of government in Ottawa and Ontario.

MoCreebec is focused on a two-track political strategy:

1) Dealing with the federal government in respect to its fiduciary responsibilities and obligations to MoCreebec people as status Indians, and;

2) Working with the Grand Council to find ways and means in making it easier for JBNQA beneficiaries living in Moose Factory and Moosonee to access JBNQA benefits.

The road will not be easy, but the Grand Council and MoCreebec are united and are working together in regards to their respective commitments to do all they can in carrying forward these agendas.

MoCreebec has come a long way since the association was established back in 1980. MoCreebec offers a variety of programs and services designed to serve the MoCreebec community, in areas such as health, housing, employment, education, and communication.

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The Long Walk to Wellness

Laurentian artist Dominique Normand documents Crees on the Journey of Wellness in a new documentary

By Jesse Staniforth

Multi-media artist Dominique Normand has a simple theme she hopes people will get from her upcoming documentary about Mistissini's Journey of Wellness: celebration of Cree culture and traditions.

"They're such beautiful people. They're so wise and easygoing, they have respect and know how to be quiet inside – to talk little and laugh a lot," Normand said. "They're amazing people who love quality in what they do, who take time doing things right the first time. They're excellent teachers. They do it slowly without many words, but you have to be totally there and absorb."

Normand joined this year's Healing Journey, a month-long retreat into the woods to learn Cree traditional hunting, fishing and camping practices, following years of involvement in Cree communities. The Journey, led by Mistissini's Kenny Loon and his wife Charlotte, "consists of participants selected by the Social Development Committee because they've expressed the intention of making big changes in their lives."

Participants may be trying to turn over a new leaf with regard to drug or alcohol use, aggression, family violence, or interpersonal difficulties. Mistissini's Social Development Department selects individuals based on their willingness to make sincere changes to past habits and behaviours.

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------ AN INITIATIVE OF ------

Journey participants range in age from the late teens to Elders in their 50s or older, all brought together by the desire to learn the skills involved in living off the land: net fishing under ice, setting up snares, hunting and dressing birds and caribou, and knowing how to build a proper tent from the ground up in the traditional style, using poles and boughs cut from black spruce.

"It's also testing yourself," Normand added. "Endurance, cold, the lack of comfort: that's what it's all about. That's what I got from the experience."

She initially encountered Crees at the Shawbridge Pow Wow, close to her home in the tiny Laurentian community of Arundel. Repeated meetings led to invites to visit Eeyou Istchee, and in time she began to make regular trips, bringing with her art supplies to teach painting and drawing to young people.

In her own art, Normand was drawn toward Native imagery, though she didn't know why. Only much later, she says, did she discover that she had Maliseet heritage from her father.

"It confirmed for me where that fascination comes from," she said.

The Journey of Wellness is a far greater commitment than simple art workshops, however, and Normand undertook the journey in order to show and explain the traditions that have kept Crees alive in Eeyou Istchee for thousands of years.

"It's also testing yourself. Endurance, cold, the lack of comfort: that's what it's all about. That's what I got from the experience."

"[White communities] don't know our neighbours," Normand said. "They don't know who they are, and they're a bit afraid of them. It's ridiculous. I just want to show and tell everyone that [Crees are] beautiful, because there's lots of prejudice. It seems like it's a calling and it's what I have to do."

As well, she wanted to document traditional practices for future generations of Crees.

"I filmed the process of how to put the net a long distance under the ice, and how they cut up the meat of the caribou, and the preparation of the food and the bannock," Normand explained.

Though she spent a month immersed in the experience, she didn't press participants to talk about the personal challenges that led them to the Wellness Journey.

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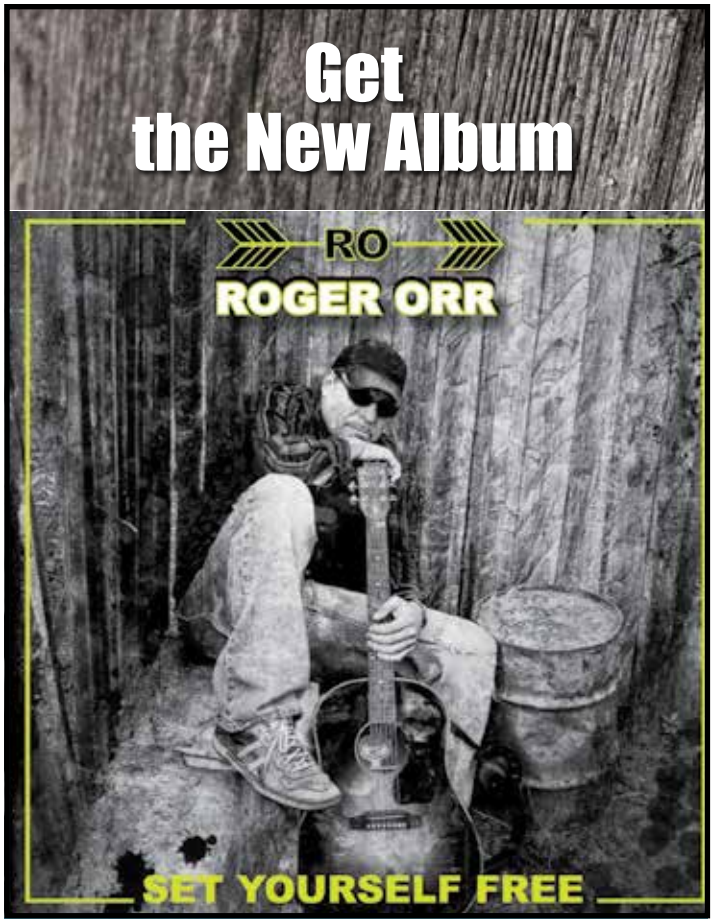
"Some of them came to me and opened up. It's a delicate thing. Most people are pretty secretive. There were also very interesting sharing circles. That's where people open up and talk about their challenges and difficulties and sadness."

Those circles, however, took place in Cree. Normand understands enough of the language to know what the subject of the discussion was, but admits that the finer details or nuances escaped her.

"And anyway," she added, "I didn't feel that it was my business. I wasn't there to intrude. I was there to help them promote the event, and also to help them have a piece of film that will inspire other people to want to make the journey. And also to leave some heritage of how it's done when you live in the bush."

Normand will present a rough cut of the film to Journey participants in Mistissini before Goose Break, and will edit her final cut based on their responses. The film should be available for public viewing by this summer.



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A woman's choice

Correcting birth control myths

By Amy German

Once a taboo subject, open discussion about contraception options is now as common and easy as a conversation over which cellphone to choose.

The only problem is that sometimes the informal chatter can lead to misconceptions about how to prevent conception. According to Dr. France Morin of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSBJ), there are a lot of myths circulating about prescribed (hormonal) birth control.

"The biggest myth surrounding birth control is that women think that they are going to gain weight," said Morin. "This is wrong. Birth control pills, the patch or the vaginal ring doesn't make you gain weight."

Morin works part-time in the north as a replacement physician in the communities while serving as a family doctor in the Montérégie town of Bedford. Her lengthy career in medicine has gained her a great deal of expertise in reproductive health.

Morin says contraception has come a long way since "the pill" hit the market back in the 1960s with many innovations and the phasing out of older forms of treatment.

When it comes to contraceptives and weight gain, Morin said that Depo Provera, a once-popular progestogen-only contraceptive that is administered by injection once every three months, was responsible for weight gain in some patients. However, this particular medication is no longer widely prescribed.

However, Morin said that people would sometimes attribute weight gain to the pill in error.

"Usually women who start taking the pill are young and so they are at a point in time when they might have gained weight anyway. Especially if they are a teenager, this can happen," said Morin.

Another concern women have is that they sometimes don't menstruate each month when they are using oral contraceptives. Morin says this is not a concern.

"We don't need to have menstruation every month. You can take the pill continuously without having menstruation. Your body will spontaneously menstruate. Many women will take this for several months without having menstruation," explained Morin.

Another myth Morin identified is the idea that women who have been using contraception need to halt it for six months to "give their body a break." Morin said there are no health benefits from temporary interruptions to using the pill.

Indeed, many women use oral contraception for their secondary effects, part of the reason why the motivation and clientele has changed dramatically over the last 50 years.

"The pill really is for women of procreation age, even up to those who are going through menopause. The definition of menopause is to have gone one year without menstruation and the average age for that is 51. But, in the years leading up to that there are women whose cycles can start to come every two weeks and then every two months and then get hot flashes. Birth-control pills at that age can really stabilize that. So I would say up until the age of 52," explained Morin.

"Women will be surprised that we would prescribe them at that age and even in circumstances where their partners have had vasectomies but it is for the hormone effect because their hormones can be really swinging at that age just before menopause."

But, that isn't where the usefulness of oral contraceptives ends. In 1997, the pill was licensed for the first time by the Food and Drug Administration in the United States as a treatment for acne.

"Some women get terrible migraines every cycle and so that is why they take it continuously and then they can skip menstruating for a whole week because of the terrible headaches or migraines," said Morin.

On top of the aesthetic benefits, the pill has been attributed to decreasing abdominal pain for those who have menstrual cramps. It can decrease the bleeding and that in turn will decrease the risk of anemia (iron deficiency) – something that

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is quite common in women. There are also studies that have shown that the pill can reduce the risk of ovarian cancer.

If you are wondering why a doctor may prescribe one brand of the pill over or another, according to Morin, since they tend to be so similar, it is more a luck of the draw.

According to Morin, there are really two different contraceptive pills on the market today with the more popular being the mixed-hormone variety, accounting for 99% of all birth-control prescriptions.

All of the mixed-hormone varieties (estrogen and progesterone) contain low doses compared to their first-generation predecessors that were marketed in the 1960s. Retired in the late 1990s as scientists discovered that birth-control pills could be made just as effective using significantly less hormones, resulting in fewer side effects. Today there are as many hormones in a month's supply of the pill as used to be in one pill from the 1960s.

While some pills are bigger sellers than others, Morin said there are over 30 varieties of mixed-hormone birth-control pills on the market at the moment and many are simply generic copies under different brand names.

With names like Loestrin24, Yaz, Yasmin, Seasonale, Seasonique, Marvelon, Alesse, TriCyclen and Triphasil, Morin said that each of these medications is equally effective as a contraceptive, provided they are taken properly.

As for deciding which one to prescribe to a new patient, Morin said that she will often leave that up to the patient. If a woman request the same prescription that her friend has, Morin simply prescribes that brand. If the patient is unsatisfied after a few months or wants to switch to a different kind, they are welcome to do so.

However, there is a protocol for changing prescriptions, which can sometimes lead to mild side effects like spotting (occasional light bleeding outside the frame of the usual menstrual period).

"Some (pills) tend to lead to spotting more than others, so we will move on to the next one or explain to the patient that, yes, they have spotting but they should be reassured that it doesn't mean that the pill is not efficient for birth control," explained Morin. "Sometimes they will change it and sometimes they won't."

The latest innovation occurred when Seasonale hit the market in 2003, which limits menstrual cycle to every three months, hence the product name.

For those who have difficulty taking the mixed-hormone pill, there is the single hormone pill (Micronor, a progestative) and this is prescribed to women who tend to have serious contraindications (problems).

This pill is prescribed less often because it needs to be taken on a strict timetable, down to the hour. Taking this pill three hours off the usual time can eliminate its effectiveness as a contraceptive and a patient will need to use condoms to prevent a pregnancy.

Some women want a long-term solution that is not permanent like a tubal ligation, or getting your tubes tied, which can only be reversed with surgery. Their option is the Inter Uterine Device (IUD, a plastic or copper device medically inserted into the uterus). The IUD has made a major comeback since its market debut in the 1970s.

"With an IUD the big myth is that you would get more infections. There was an issue with this in the 1970s about a type of IUD (the Dalkon Shield) but the ones that we use now are completely different. We use hormone-release IUDs now. The first one, Mirena, came out about 10 years ago and the great advantage of this that over time women will actually get fewer and fewer periods (due to the hormone release) and many women won't get their periods at all and so they like it," said Morin.

What has also changed is who can get an IUD. In the past, the tendency was to only install an IUD in a patient who had already given birth, but that is no longer the case. Today, anyone who wants one can have them installed, which will be done during menstruation or immediately after because the cervix tends to be more open at that time.

The Mirena could even be prescribed to someone who has never even had sex because of other beneficial effects.

"Some women have problems with the thickening of the blood or coagulation. The bleeding is so intense that they can get anemia so we have to find a treatment for it because they

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can become tired and so sometimes Mirena is prescribed. It actually lasts for five years," said Morin.

Once more, most doctors can and will install an IUD at a local clinic. In cases where there is difficulty however, a patient will be sent to see a specialist for the installation.

For those looking for something less invasive, just as effective as the pill and so discreet that you can actually forget about it for three weeks at a time, there is Nuva Ring, the contraceptive ring.

"It is a polymer ring that has microscopic holes that will slowly release small amounts of hormones. For a woman who is concerned about taking medication in general and is looking for the weakest dose possible, this is for them because it really is the weakest dose. You put this anywhere in the vagina and the hormone will release very slowly and you change it every three weeks," said Morin.

Another easy method that some women opt for is the birth-control transdermal patch. Placed on the arm once per week, the patch slowly releases a hormone that is absorbed through the skin. This method is less effective with overweight women, however.

There are risks with taking any of these medications and their benefits and drawbacks should be discussed with a physician. For example, the risk of blood clots rises if the patient smokes, particularly if they are over 35 and obese. In this case Morin said she recommends that a patient quit smoking if they want to stay on the pill.

Lastly, for someone who is not on any of these more conventional forms of birth control and has an accident with a condom and fears that they may get pregnant or has forgotten to take their pill effectively and has intercourse, there is always Plan B. Known as "the morning-after pill," Plan B is a two-pill contraceptive that must be taken within five days of intercourse to prevent a pregnancy.

What most people don't realize about this medication is that if need be, it can be taken multiple times in one month. It is effective as contraception for five days but is more effective if you take it within 72 hours of intercourse.

"If you are already pregnant and say you take it 10 days before you know, it won't harm the baby. The same is true for any pill. Some women can be pregnant for two months and not know and it won't harm the baby at all. This is available directly from the pharmacist in any clinic in the Cree Nation and you can just go in and the nurse will prescribe it," said Morin.

All of the information in this article does not replace the necessary conversation must have with their doctor or a nurse at a clinic. And it should be emphasized that none of these treatments, with the exception of condoms, can prevent a sexually transmitted infection.

For more information on any of these medications or subjects: www.sexualityandu.ca/

Rock Competition
THE CREE MINERAL EXPLORATION BOARD
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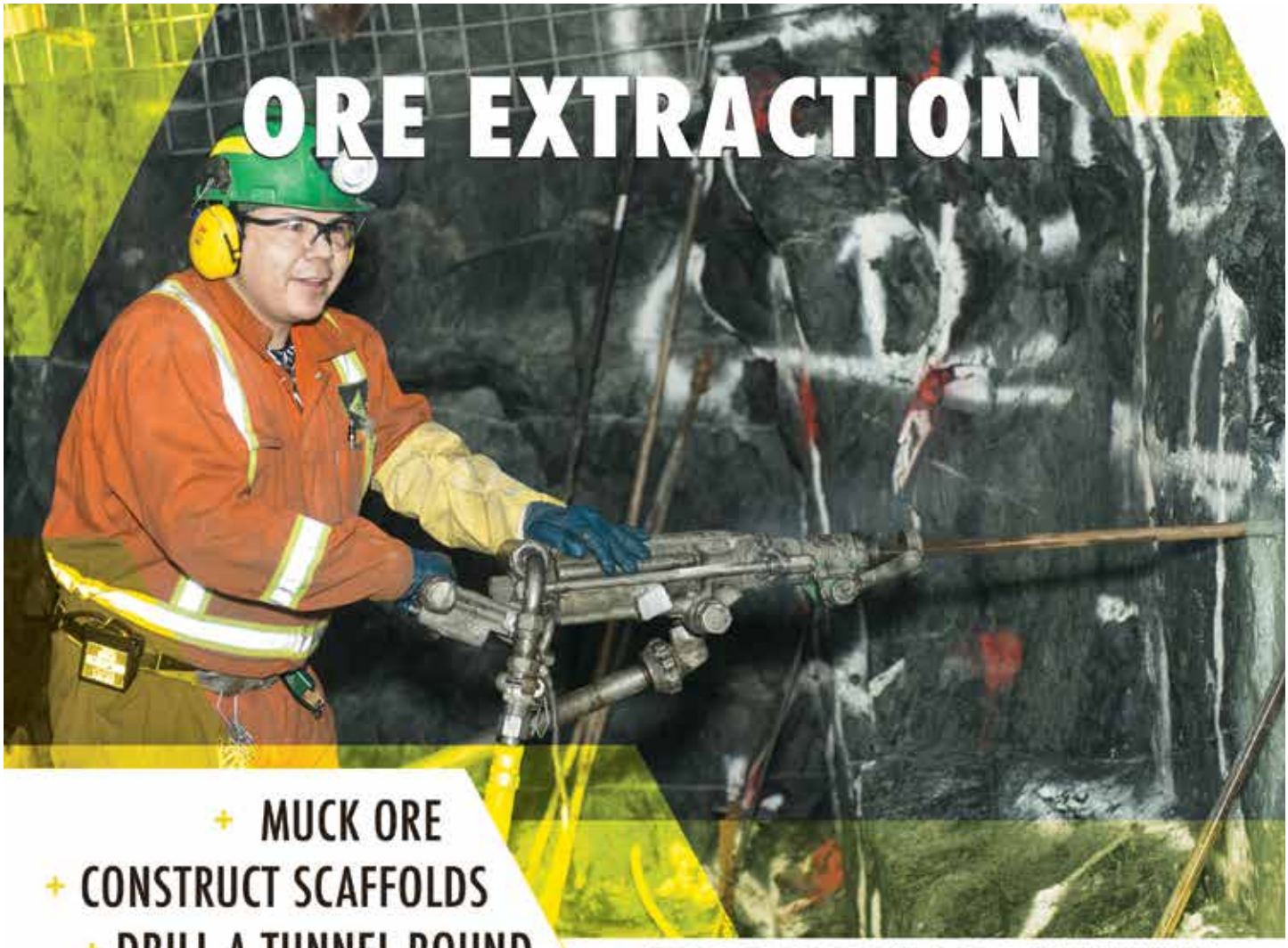
Go dig and have fun!
General prize category:
1st prize $1,500
2nd prize $1,000
3rd prize $500
Prospectors category:
One prize of $2,000
The Cree Mineral Exploration Board's Rock Competition to reward new mineral discoveries in Eeyou Istchee
Requirements:
• New discovery
• Sample must be the size of a fist
• Sample must be located on a map
• Complete the application form
Deadline and shipping:
• CMEB assumes the analysis expenses of the participating samples
• The contest ends on October 31
• Shipping is at participant's expense
Don't forget:
• Hints on the ground: look for rusty surfaces
• Hints after breaking: sample metallic minerals
NAME
PHONE
ADDRESS
COMMUNITY
SAMPLE COLLECTED FROM
❑ Shore Line ❑ Island ❑ Stream Bank ❑ River Bank
❑ Lake Side ❑ Mountain ❑ Other
SAMPLE LOCATION PLACE NAME
MAP
GPS COORDINATES E N
SIGNATURE
Coordinates: 16 Beaver Road, Box 210, Wemindji, QC, Canada J0M 1L0
Tel: 819-978-0264 ext. 327 Fax: 819-978-3834 E-mail: youceflarbi@creenet.com



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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Twinkle, twinkle little star

by Xavier Kataquapit

Recently, I ventured out on a long sandy beach and walked several kilometres along the icy waters of Lake Erie. I was happy that it was warm enough to be able to leave my footprints in the sand rather than the snow.

This past winter was a cold one for southern Ontario and it was the first time in many years that most of the Great Lakes froze completely over. Even now, at the end of April, I could still see ice flows moving by.

As it got dark so I sat down on the sand to stare up at the sky. I hate to admit it but it had been a while since I had done any stargazing. I think most of us tend to forget that we live on a spinning planet that is hurtling through space as it revolves around the sun. It makes me feel good to stare up at the stars.

The Cree of the James Bay coast have always been aware of the stars. These bright lights in the sky were our guides for traveling on the land or on the water.

My Elders and ancestors spent most of their time on the land harvesting food for survival and gathering firewood. We didn't see things under artificial light the way we do these days. People tend to get stuck in their lives and spend most of the time in their homes watching TV or on the Internet, driving in their cars to and from work or school and rarely connecting to Mother Nature.

We tend to think that the universe revolves around us but of course that's a joke. As I sat on the darkening beach, I was reminded that there are more stars in our known universe than all of the grains of sand on all of the beaches on our planet. This fact sure reminds me of just how insignificant we human beings are in the grand scheme of things.

I was also reminded that we humans have only recently begun to understand our place in the universe. Even though ancient astronomers, philosophers and scientists considered the natural order of things, many times religious beliefs and political minds of the day censored new knowledge.

The most famous example is Galileo, who observed in the early 1600s that our planet and the other planets revolved around a stationary sun. This contradicted the conventional wisdom of the time that earth was the centre of the universe. Galileo was convicted by the Roman inquisition of heresy and put under house arrest for the rest of his life. Many decades later, after research by other astronomers, the Catholic Church relented on the censorship of Galileo's work.

Indigenous people have always understood their relationship to the natural world. They were in awe of the stars, the sun, the moon, the trees, the animals, waterways and mountains. Their belief systems involved all of these elements. Today we have a clearer understanding of how things work but our connection to all things natural seems to be out of sync.

There is a resurgence of interest in stargazing but that is mostly due to the fact that we are hearing more about asteroids and meteors crashing into our atmosphere. Part of this is due to our media and electronic surveillance providing us with more awareness of these phenomena. We have not entered into any new phase of meteor activity; it is just that we have become more aware of how vulnerable we are in our universe.

Every year, astronomers are finding more potential planets that could sustain life. From my vantage point, sitting on top of billions of grains of sand and staring into what seems to be an infinite space of stars and galaxies, the importance of man is fleeting. I like to believe that there is another being out there on one of those planets looking back and wondering the same thing.

Easy diet, great food and a hot body

Recipes from Harley Pasternak's Body Reset Diet

by Amy German

There are endless diets out there that preach the virtues of smoothies and offer recipes to lose weight, but if they are complicated and require exotic ingredients, it is likely that the diet change won't be sustainable.

This isn't the case with Harley Pasternak's new *Body Reset Diet Cookbook*. The much-anticipated follow-up to his bestselling *Body Reset Diet*, this cookbook follows the same principles but includes an additional 150 tantalizing recipes.

The great thing about Pasternak is that he's a no-nonsense trainer with a science background. His plan isn't a magic-bullet solution for rapid weight loss that often sees dieters packing the pounds back on the minute they resume their old habits.

Instead, this cookbook is a solid guide for the nutrition novice that serves up easy-to-understand information about the nutrients your body needs and how to prepare them.

Pasternak guide will help jumpstart weight loss through a healthy diet and exercise plan. It's easy to follow and maintain with a mix of smoothies, solid meals and satisfyingly crunchy snacks.

Pasternak demystifies the smoothie experience, providing basic recipes that are ideal for those who may be new to preparing their own food.

The cookbook makes it easy to transition from pre-prepared diet beverages and frozen meals because anyone can quickly use these recipes that don't require hard-to-find ingredients but are still deliciously satisfying.

A huge bonus is that his food plan can save you money because its uses everyday ingredients such as frozen fruits, whole grains like oatmeal, barley or quinoa, milk or non-dairy milk alternatives and simple meats.

Here are a few recipes to try, courtesy of Penguin Books.

Blueberry Quinoa Smoothie

Serves 1

The Peruvian super-grain quinoa is nearly a complete food in and of itself. It's a complete protein (meaning it provides all the essential amino acids), it's high in water-soluble fibre, and it contains healthy fats.

2 tablespoons (30 mL) cooked quinoa (preferably white)

1 cup (250 mL) unsweetened almond milk

½ large frozen banana, chopped

½ cup (125 mL) frozen raspberries

¾ cup (175 mL) frozen blueberries

½ serving unsweetened protein powder

1 tablespoon (15 mL) wheat germ

Ice cubes (optional)

Place all ingredients in a blender in the order listed. Add ice if preferred. Blend until desired consistency is reached, adding water to thin out if necessary.

Modified version

For men or those 170 pounds (77 kg) and up, increase ingredients by one-third.

Nutritional information (per serving)

Calories 307 • Carbs 52 grams • Protein 17 grams • Fat 6 grams • Fibre 12 grams

BBQ Chicken Chili

Serves 5

I like to double or triple this recipe and freeze the extra for those days when my wife and I don't have even five minutes to throw some dinner together.

1 tablespoon (15 mL) olive or other oil

1 cup (250 mL) chopped onions
3 cloves garlic, minced
8 ounces (225 g) ground chicken breast
1 cup (250 mL) chopped fresh peppers (such as Anaheim, Hatch, bell, jalapeño)
2 cans (14 ounces/398 mL each) beans (such as black, pinto, kidney), drained and rinsed
1 can (14 ounces/398 mL) diced tomatoes
1 can (14 ounces/398 mL) puréed tomatoes
2 tablespoons (30 mL) chili powder
1 tablespoon (15 mL) ground cumin
2 tablespoons (30 mL) Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons (30 mL) cider vinegar or other vinegar
1 teaspoon (5 mL) stevia or sweetener of your choice
Shredded fat-free cheese and chopped green onions, for garnish

1. Heat a soup pot over medium-high heat. Add olive oil.
2. Add onions, garlic, and chicken; sauté until chicken is cooked through and lightly colored, about 7 minutes.
3. Add peppers; sauté until soft, about 4 minutes.
4. Add beans, diced tomatoes, puréed tomatoes, chili powder, cumin, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar and stevia; stir to combine.
5. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 20 to 45 minutes. The longer it cooks, the more the flavour develops.
6. Divide among bowls and top with cheese and green onions, if desired.

Nutritional information (per serving)
Calories 348 • Carbs 54 grams • Protein 28 grams • Fat 4 grams • Fibre 14 grams

Fruit and Nut Popcorn Bars
Serves 20

If you're craving a crunchy yet chewy treat, these bars are for you. They travel well in a sandwich bag.

Cooking oil spray
7 cups (1.75 L) fat-free air-popped popcorn (6 tablespoons/90 mL kernels)
2½ cups (625 mL) bran buds cereal
2 cups (500 mL) old-fashioned rolled oats
½ cup (125 mL) raisins
6 tablespoons (90 mL) unsweetened shredded coconut
¼ cup (60 mL) ground flaxseed
24 raw almonds, chopped
10 dried apricots, thinly sliced
½ cup (125 mL) brown rice syrup
½ cup (125 mL) honey
1 tablespoon (15 mL) vanilla extract
⅓cup powdered peanut butter (or 2 teaspoons/10 mL reduced-fat peanut butter)
¼ teaspoon (1 mL) salt

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 13×9-inch (3.5 L) baking pan with cooking oil.
2. In a large bowl, combine popcorn, bran cereal, oats, raisins, coconut, flaxseed, almonds and apricots; stir well.
3. In a small saucepan, combine brown rice syrup, honey, vanilla, peanut butter and salt. Cook, stirring, over medium-low heat for 5 minutes.
4. Pour over popcorn mixture and stir until all ingredients are coated.
5. Pour mixture into the baking pan. Cover with wax or parchment paper (or use slightly wet hands) and firmly press mixture into baking pan.
6. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before cutting into bars.

Nutritional information (per serving)
Calories 187 • Carbs 36 grams • Protein 4 grams • Fat 5 grams • Fibre 8 grams

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meetings in Mistissini: Alcoholics Anonymous, Tuesday's Hope Meeting, are at 7PM at the Mamou-Wechidodow Building Amisk Street. **Alanon Meetings** are on Tuesdays as well at 7PM at the Mamou-Wechidodow Building Amisk Street. **Alateen Meetings** are on Mondays at 3:30PM at the Reception Centre 282 Main Street. These meetings are all open meetings.

TD Scholarships for Community Leadership - Apply today! Applications available at Your high school or CEGEP (in Quebec) Online at www.td.com/scholarship or Call 1-800-308-8306 TTY (Text telephone) 1-800-361-1180

Cultural Manual for Foster and Adoptive parents of Aboriginal Children, launched at the last Gathering of the NETWORK on October 3... CHECK IT OUT! www.reseaumtl-network.com/eng/Portals/5/Cultural%20Manual.pdf

The Aviva Community Fund is Canada's longest running online community competition. With over $2.5 million dollars given away to date, the Aviva Community Fund is making a difference in communities across the country. Submit your idea for positive change and have a chance at sharing in this year's $1 million Aviva Community Fund.

For more info go to http://www.avivacommunityfund.org/

Kid's Help Phone Line:
1-800-668-6868
(www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth Helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parents' Helpline: 1-800-361-5085
(www.parenthelpline.ca)

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared.
514-843-4333
(www.enfant-retourquebec.ca)

Drug Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626
(www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626
(www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:
1-800-363-9010
(www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality Resources Center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688 (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:
1-866-277-3553
(www.suicide-quebec.net)

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

Concordia University, Montreal:

The Centre for Native Education has changed its name to the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC). The new name is inclusive of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the centre serves and recognizes its role as a resource for the Concordia community. For any further details contact: aboriginalcentre@concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 ext. 7327.

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